



Interpretational Variations of Nepali Poems Translated to English

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Abstract

Teaching of poetry has contributed much to the field of English language teaching; however, studies on how interpretational variations through translation are scarce. This study explores the interpretational variations that emerge when teaching poetry in the classroom. The research examines a selection of Nepali poems and their English translations to identify the shifts in meaning, tone, cultural context, and stylistic elements that occur during the translation process. Additionally, it highlights the inherent challenges in translating poetic works by employing a comparative analysis, such as preserving the original emotional depth, cultural nuances, and linguistic intricacies. The research underscores the importance of a nuanced approach to translation that balances fidelity to the original text with the creative adaptation necessary to convey the essence of poetry in a different language. For this research, five major poems in Nepali were selected which were translated into English: Pinjadako Suga (Parrot in the Cage) by Lekhanath Poudel, Aimai (Woman) by Banira Giri, Ghantaghar (The Clock Tower) by Bhu Pi Serchan, Naya Barsa (New Year) by Parijat and The Brook by Laxmi Prasad Devkota. The study is also based on the subjective interpretation made by the teachers, which creates variation in meaning. The findings reveal that while translations strive to remain faithful to the source texts, significant variations often arise due to differences in linguistic structures, cultural references, and the translators' subjective interpretations. These variations can lead to a reimagining of the poems, offering new dimensions and perspectives to the readers of the translated versions. The study is expected to contribute to the broader discourse on translation studies, highlighting the complex interplay between language, culture, and the interpretation of poems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literary writings reflect the writers' minds, which visualize society and the inner conflicts that go into the readers' minds. Realist creative writers like Chekhov (2001) and Maupassant (2003) believe literature should reflect culture and contradiction. Similarly, the other writers who represent different epochs of history interpret it differently. Among different learning genres, poetry is one of the best forms of literature for expressing one's thoughts and emotions. A literary language goes through a great range of adventures and experiments (Spacks, 2008). Forms and genres take shape: comedy and tragedy, the ode and the epic, the novel and the

dramatic poem, blank verse, stream of consciousness. Literary language moves between high formality and vernacular ease; everyday speech frequently transforms conventions when they grow fixed, creating a major literary and emotional revolution, as with the Romantic Movement.

A literary language goes through a great range of adventures and experiments. Forms and genres take shape: comedy and tragedy, the ode and the epic, the novel and the dramatic poem, blank verse, and stream of consciousness (Martin, 2005). Similarly, Hall and Hall (2015) state that literary language moves between high formality and vernacular ease; everyday speech frequently transforms conventions when they grow fixed. Poems written in the source language are translated into English, which might lose the rhythm. Unlike in the prose, there remains no grace to the poem during translation.

If we look at the history of translation of English literary text, British and American poets have little trouble drawing sustenance from what one might call the “international canon” of poets in translation: Rilke, Milosz, Brodsky, Seferis, or Neruda, to name just a few (Arnaldi, 2019). And it would be too easy to argue that these poets are “major” while contemporary poets of the English language are not. A better explanation might be that foreign poets, because they must be translated, are translatable into familiar and, therefore, acceptable dialects. Rilke, for instance, may be read in Leishman’s English, or MacIntyre’s, Bly’s, and more recently Mitchell’s American. Larkin, on the other hand, must be read in Larkin’s English, Ted Hughes in his own very different English. The subtle “language barrier” involved here is a serious impediment to both informal and critical reading.

Translation is a multifaceted discipline that requires linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and subject matter expertise. Translators must navigate various challenges to produce accurate, clear, and culturally appropriate texts, whether translating a novel, a legal document, or a software interface (Ali, 2023). As technology advances, tools like CAT and MT become integral to translation, enhancing efficiency and consistency while requiring human oversight and creativity. Translation is converting text or speech from one language (the source language) into another (the target language) (Baihaqi, 2018). This process involves a literal conversion of words and an interpretation of meaning, context, cultural nuances, and the intention behind the original text (Gadamer, 2007). The goal of translation is to produce a target text that conveys the same meaning and evokes similar responses in the target audience as the source text does in its original audience.

Different scholars have translated the Nepali poems into the English language. While the teachers teach these versions of poems in the classrooms, the meaning is deviated (Khansir, 2012). The composition of a poem is influenced by the poem's mood, attitude, and context in the original version; however, these elements cannot generally be maintained in the translated version. Richards (2017) believes that only experienced readers can find the actual mood and attitude of the poet. This leads to a wider variation of the translated version of the poem.

There are many poems written in the Nepali language and later translated into the English language. These translations are either by the writer himself/herself or sometimes by other scholars (Manea & Manea, 2013). Poems are an essential literary genre prescribed in almost all academic curricula, from primary to university. While teaching a poem, a teacher brings the context in which the poem was produced and links it with its meaning. While dealing with the

meaning, the poem's tone, attitude, and situation are also analyzed. Moreover, the rhetorical devices used in the poem also become important in generating the meaning of the poem. Generally, these things are interpreted while teaching poems written in Nepali or English. However, we found many variations in meaning while teaching poems in the original and translated versions.

Translation is a vehicle for transmigrating one culture to another. There are very few research studies that have explored how translation influences teaching (Adhikari, 2021; Bastola, 2023). However, studies on how different variations of translation influence teaching poetry are scarce, for example (Poudel, 2024), in the Nepali ELT context. It is also a vehicle. These days, the world's greatest accomplishment is translation. It's a language exercise procedure. The primary goal of literal translation is a word-for-word translation, but because of the translator's intermediary step in the translation process, it lacks cultural significance. While translating introduces us to various cultures and writings, it also involves much harm. As a result, translators are proficient in both the source and destination languages. It is not feasible without proficiency in both languages, which leads to manipulation. To bridge this gap, this study aimed to explore how poems are dealt with in the Nepali EFL contexts and compare the variations in meaning while teaching the original and translated versions of poems.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the literature related to interpersonal variations of poems that provide guidelines for designing and developing research tools in the present study. Various studies (Adhikari, 2012; Bhattarai, 2018; Dingwaney, 1995; Gutt, 2014; Jakobson, 2000; Plato, 2017; Richards, 2017; Walkowitz, 2006) have explored and presented their opinions on how variations in the translation of poems offer multiple poetic interpretations.

Walkowitz (2006), drawing on Gauri Viswanathan's work, explores the question, "Where is English literature produced?" Viswanathan argues that English literature is not created solely in England, but also in colonial and postcolonial contexts where it was institutionalized through education and cultural systems. She highlights the role of marginalized groups—such as Jews, Dissenters, and Catholics—and emphasizes that literature becomes "English literature" only through institutional classification and disciplinary frameworks. Thus, literature's production depends not just on where it is written, but where it is taught, analyzed, and given social meaning—even in places where English is a second language. However, Gutt (2014) states that translation fails to match the pseudo-poetry of the original. He points out that the target language may not accept pretension and exaggeration in a text of this type and that the translation should not attempt a match on this dimension.

Adhikari (2012) claims that a translator works with two basic assumptions. The first is that a source language text lends itself to interpretation. The text can be oral or written, and interpretation can be direct (when the translator accesses the source text himself/herself through reading) or indirect (when the translator accesses the source text via another interpreter). Second, what has been interpreted lends itself to rewriting in any language. The variations in interpretations of the poems might affect the meaning. Similarly, Dingwaney (1995) presents a balanced view of translation on interpersonal variations. The author states that translation is one of the primary means by which texts written in one or another indigenous language of the various countries arbitrarily grouped under the Third or Non-Western world are made available

in a metropolitan language. However, translation is not restricted to such linguistic transfers alone. The translation is also a vehicle through which 'third world cultures' (are made to) travel, transferred, or borne across to and recuperated by audiences in the West.

Plato's *Ion* (2017) explores the nature of poetic insights through a negotiation between Socrates and a skilled Rhapsode, Ion. Although Ion claims that poetic interpretations are essential, Socrates states that poetic talent should be derived from divine insights, not knowledge. The text compares reason with inspiration, examining the origins of creative influence. Jakobson (2000) identified six functions of language in his communication model, one of which is the poetic function. The poetic function focuses on the message and its expression rather than simply conveying information. This function is concerned with the aesthetic quality of language, emphasizing its form, structure, and stylistic elements. Jakobson's poetic function emphasizes the aesthetic and formal aspects of language, making the message the focus of attention, especially in literature and poetry. Conversely, the emotive function deals with expressing the speaker's emotions and subjective experiences. Both functions highlight how language conveys meaning and engages the listener or reader.

Richards (2017) offered his theory of the four kinds of meaning—sense, feeling, tone, and intention as tracing the ground for literary criticism poses as sophisticated for any history of English criticism as earlier attempts are bound to fail. The author explored poetry as containing multiple emotive and referential constructions and calls for the need for simultaneous interpretation of words and language. He believed that poetry, or literature in general, involves multiple language functions, and each serves a distinct purpose. The challenge of every text lies in understanding its meaning, an undertaking that characterizes the beginnings of New Criticism and modern poetics. Richards emphasizes that no absolute account can be given; he notes the variance from account to account, for there focuses one in each case on different meanings within the text – some on tone, some on feeling – thus leading to many interpretations.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach, employing an interpretative research design to explore the experiences of university teachers and students implementing five selected texts at the University of Nepal in their original and translated versions. The interpretative paradigm believes in socially constructed realities and focuses on the full complexity of human sense-making as the situation emerges (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005; Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Focusing on teachers' and students' personal experiences, beliefs, and feelings, interpretative research investigates an individual's interpretation of the social phenomena they interact with (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016; Sharma & Gnawali, 2025). This design enabled us to investigate how teachers interpret, reflect on, and make sense of poems in the class (Bhandari et al., 2025) and proceed with meaning-making.

3.2. Research Site and Participants

The study involved 10 bachelor-level students and 10 teachers teaching at the same level at the Tribhuvan University and Pokhara University campuses (two each) in the Rupandehi district of Nepal. We purposively selected the participants based on their experience of teaching and learning poetry through translation, their interest in prolonged engagement with the study, and

their willingness to share their instructional practices. These qualities helped us to build rapport and trust, enabling us to collect rich data.

3.3.Data Collection Techniques

To collect the necessary data for the current study, we employed a combination of questionnaires, interview guidelines, focus group discussions, field notes, and audio and video materials (Dahal et al., 2024). We employed a series of questions with the students, a list of topics for the students to share and discuss their experiences in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a set of qualitative interview guidelines with the teachers. Additionally, we collected secondary data analyzing the research reports, master's theses from university departments, journal articles, and books to triangulate the data from the interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions.

3.3.1. Selection of Texts

We selected five major texts: *Pinjadako Suga (Parrot in the Cage)* by Lekhanath Poudel, *The Brook* by Laxmi Prasad Devkota, *Ghantaghar (The Clock Tower)* by Bhu Pi Serchan, *Naya Barsa (New Year)* by Parijat and *Aimai (Woman)* by Banira Giri. These texts were created, so they were translated into English for study purposes.

3.4.Data Analysis and Meaning-Making

The data obtained from questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups were transcribed and translated into English in order to enable analysis and reporting of the findings of the study. Following the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), we familiarized ourselves with the detailed data, which enabled us to proceed with the analysis and meaning-making process. After we read and re-read the data to make sure not to miss any important bits of information, we generalized the initial codes, searched for possible themes from the initial codes, reviewed these themes, defined them to meet the purpose of the study, and finally produced the final report. The thematic coding and interpretation enabled us to construct meaningful insights into the pedagogical dimensions of teaching poetry in higher education.

4. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This section analyses the selected poems from the perspectives of the participant teachers and students, focusing on the meaning and the content in their original and translated versions.

4.1.Synthesized Analysis of Interpretational Variations in Translated Nepali Poems

Using a thematic synthesis technique, this part provides a succinct and comparative summary of the interpretational parallels and discrepancies between the chosen Nepali poetry and their English translations. The following table summarizes recurring patterns observed across all five poems: "Parrot in the Cage," "The Brook," "The Clock Tower," "New Year," and "Woman."

Table 1:

Cross-Poem Interpretational Patterns

Aspect	Commonalities	Differences in Translation	Interpretational Impact

Themes	Freedom, time, nature, identity, and renewal consistently appear.	Philosophical or socio-political depth (e.g., moksha, patriarchy) is diluted.	Readers grasp broad ideas but miss nuanced implications.
Tone	Emotional consistency retained (e.g., nostalgia, lamentation).	Some shifts in tone (e.g., from revolutionary to reflective).	Alter intensity and reader engagement.
Imagery & Symbols	Symbols like parrot, clock, brook, and wasp recur and retain base significance.	Deeper metaphors are often lost or replaced with simpler visual language.	Simplifies complex cultural imagery.
Cultural References	Contextual grounding in Nepali culture is present in all originals.	Translations substitute or generalize (e.g., "Chaitra" to "March").	Loses cultural and temporal specificity.
Language & Diction	Efforts to maintain poetic diction and tone.	Lexical choices often flatten emotional connotations (e.g., "baburo" = "child").	Semantic shifts lead to different emotional readings.
Poetic Structure	Structure loosely maintained.	Rhyme and meter are often sacrificed in English for clarity.	Loss of musicality and stylistic depth.
Pedagogical Framing	Teachers align central ideas across both versions.	Nepali instructors emphasize historical and mythological context; English ones use comparative literature.	Leads to varied classroom interpretations.

Interpretational differences among the examined poems are often caused by language and cultural translation errors. Readers' perceptions are frequently altered by changes in diction, symbolism, and cultural background, although the thematic core of the poems is maintained. These differences are not isolated but rather systemic, as shown by a table-based comparative approach, which emphasizes the need for instructional strategies that draw attention to and contextualize these changes. In order to measure understanding differences, future iterations of this study may use student response charts and visual mappings of translation alterations. This method improves reader awareness and clarity by honing the way similarities and differences are presented.

4.2. The Parrot in the Cage (Pinjadako Suga)

The poem, *Pinjadako Suga (The Parrot in the Cage)*, was composed by a famous Nepali poet, Lekhanath Poudel, in 1941 B.S. (1984 A. D.). The writings of Balmiki and Motiram Bhatta

inspired him toward poetry at the tender age of five. His poetry effortlessly captures the essence of Nepal and its surroundings. The enduring poem *Pinjadako Suga* highlighted the brutality of the Rana dynasty towards the Nepali populace. The poem alludes to Rana as the jailer and the Nepali people as a bird in a cage.

The poem is a monologue in a dramatic form. Laxmi Prasad Devkota, the great poet of Nepal, translated the poem *Pinjadako Suga* into English as *The Parrot in the Cage*. The parrot bemoans its existence and the state of its cage and tells of its suffering, grief, and estrangement from loved ones. We glimpse the parrot's personality and disposition from its phrases. We also learn how the parrot regrets its destiny according to its thoughts. From the parrot's words, we can comprehend how it is just managing to survive in the prison and has come to terms with its predicament.

The following reading of Lekhanath Poudel's poetry in both its original and translated versions was found through analysis.

Similarities

- a. Theme: The poem includes tranquility, happiness, justice, and freedom. The poem is a scathing parody of the Rana Regime, which denied the people of Nepal their independence at the time. The speaker meticulously portrays the surroundings in which the parrot lives. The English teacher mentioned in the FGD, "The brutal truth of men's lives disappoints the speaker." The English and Nepali teachers agreed in the interview that the parrot has been forced to live a sad existence apart from its freedom, home, kin, and friends. The parrot's situation reflects the state of Nepali citizens during the Rana Regime. As a reverent observer of nature, Poudel conveys his abiding love for the natural environment, which satisfies his boyhood hunger and fulfills his desires in later life. Poudel laments living away from his friends, family, and house and feels nostalgic for them. Ultimately, the poem unearths the voices of human circumstances and political, social, religious, and spiritual habits using a parrot. The poem unequivocally supports the natural human desire to live an independent, hard life apart from the masses. Students in the interviews asserted that the predicament of the parrot in both renditions prompts contemplation of existential issues, addressing themes of emancipation, agony, and the essence of life.
- b. Imagery: The teachers interpreted that the primary symbols, the parrot and the cage, are present in both versions. They represented the soul or individual and the constraints of worldly life or physical body. The natural imagery to depict the parrot's longing for the outside world, emphasizing the contrast between the natural, free world and the artificial, confined one, was also commonly interpreted by the teachers and the students.
- c. Tone: Students asserted that the poem's tone is pathetic, both in the Nepali and English versions. It's a lamentation of a parrot living free in its habitat with friends and family.

Differences

- a. Language and Diction: Original (Nepali): The original poem in Nepali employs traditional and classical Nepali diction, which might carry connotations and cultural

nuances specific to the language and the time it was written. The first two lines in the original poem:

Balak baburo dijasu kanama

Hu ma pareko chhu pinjadama (original version)

A pitiful, twice-born child called a parrot,
I have been trapped in a cage, (translated version)

Teachers teaching in the Nepali version explained the word “baburo” as “miserable” who is in a painful situation. In contrast, the teachers teaching the English version mentioned the meaning of “child” superficially, which cannot carry the real meaning of the poem. The translator’s inappropriate word choice causes interpretational variation. Readers who are not Nepalis may understand the English version differently if it tries to bridge cultural barriers by adding or removing certain culturally distinctive components. In Nepali, some words and phrases may have deeper connotations that are difficult to translate into English. The translator’s interpretation might influence the readers’ perceptions of the nuances. Additionally, the translator’s subjective interpretation and decision-making might affect the reader’s comprehension or emotional reaction to the poetry, bringing minute differences in tone or emphasis.

- b. Poetic Structure: The Nepali version’s rhyme system, rhythm, and structure are based on traditional Nepali literary traditions; these elements have no English counterparts. The English translation changed the original’s meter and rhyme to preserve readability and poetic quality, as it modified the structure to comply with English literary traditions. For example, the rhyme scheme in the last stanza of the original version is aabb, whereas in the translated version, the rhyme scheme is not maintained. It is because of that the ‘ness’ of the poem has been missing.

Prithivi talma yeutasamma a

Manis baki rahadasamma a

Tuchha Sugako janma nadeu b

Din dayalu binti leu. b (original version)

While a single man on this earth remains,
Until all men have vanished,
Do not let poor parrots be born,
Oh Lord, please hear my prayer! (translated version)

Pinjadako Suga and its translated version, *The Parrot in the Cage*, have different languages, cultural contexts, and possibly even poetry styles; however, both have similar basic ideas, imagery, and emotional overtones. Although the translation aims to capture the spirit of the original poetry, teachers and students will encounter the poem differently in each version due to the inherent variations in language and cultural expression, which lead to interpretational variation.

4.3. The Brook (Khola)

Born in Dillibazar, Kathmandu, on November 12, 1909, Laxmi Prasad Devkota is widely regarded as one of Nepal's best poets, frequently receiving the label "Maha Kavi" (Great Poet). He was steeped in studying classical Sanskrit and Nepali literature from a young age, having grown up in a Brahmin family known for their scholarship. After pursuing his studies, Devkota attended Patna University in India, where he graduated with degrees in law and arts, and Trichandra College in Kathmandu. His creative career, characterized by the combination of Romanticism with traditional Nepali themes, gave rise to well-known pieces like "Shakuntala," a lyrical epic influenced by classical Sanskrit literature, and "Muna Madan," a sorrowful narrative poem that examines the socioeconomic problems of Nepalese society.

Notwithstanding his literary success, Devkota had serious personal struggles, including money and health problems, frequently impacting his writing. He was transparent about his battles with mental health, which gave his examination of human pain and resiliency more nuance and realness. Beyond his poems, Devkota significantly influenced Nepali writing with plays, essays, and short tales that mirrored his progressive ideas and compassion for all people. His vast corpus of work, which continues to inspire and resonate with readers and authors alike, lives on after his death on September 14, 1959, solidifying his status as a timeless figure in Nepali literature.

Devkota's poem *The Brook* is translated into Nepali by the researcher himself. The poem celebrates a striking account of a brook's voyage through the natural world, signifying the passage of life and all its stages. The poem reflects existence's dynamic and ever-changing aspect by capturing *The Brook's* unrelenting movement as it meanders over various terrains. Using vivid images and metaphors, Devkota depicts the brook's relationships with its surroundings—including rocks, trees, and animals. *The Brook* emphasizes themes of perseverance and the cyclical aspect of life through its unceasing flow and fortitude in the face of adversity. The poem emphasizes that life marches onward, overcoming obstacles and appreciating the beauty of the present moment, much like the brook, and uses this naturalistic representation to express a deeper philosophical message about the nature of life's journey.

Similarities

- a. Theme: The teachers teaching both versions of this poem interpret the poem as celebrating nature. The poet describes how the brook sings as it travels, delighted to meet an ocean. When sunbeams hit it, it glows. He examines the natural resources in these poems and expresses gratitude for the compassion of nature toward humanity. The sunbeam-covered creek flows through the mountain. The water gleams. Happily, it sets out on its trek to the ocean. The students in FGD asserted, "The poet uses a variety of other exquisitely rendered natural aspects to enhance his description of the creek and its voyage". The teacher teaching English claimed that according to the brook, he is a singer. It dons the silver-thread saree of water and leaps to the ground while singing.
- b. Personification: The interpretation made by all the teachers and students was that the brook is endowed with human characteristics, including the capacity to "sing," "dance," or "murmur," which makes the account of its voyage more realistic and accessible.

- c. Imagery: Devkota paints a vivid picture of the brook's route and surroundings using rich tactile, aural, and visual imagery. Readers are drawn in by descriptions of the brook's interactions with plants, animals, and rocks.
- d. Lack of Concrete Context: The poem's universal themes might come at the expense of specific, concrete context. Critics could argue that the poem does not provide enough detail about the cultural or geographical setting, which might make it feel somewhat detached or generalized.

Differences

- a. Comparative Literature: The Brook was compared to other comparable pieces of English literature by an English teacher, including the poem of the same name by Alfred Lord Tennyson. This comparative method can draw attention to common themes and diverse cultural viewpoints on life and the natural world. Additionally, they examined how Devkota's work relates to or deviates from Western literary traditions by placing the poem within the larger framework of Romanticism or other literary movements.
- b. Symbolism: The brook's symbolic voyage was interpreted by the teachers with a focus on the philosophical and spiritual beliefs of Nepal, including the notions of moksha (liberation) and samsara (the cycle of life, death, and rebirth), whereas the English teacher and students interpreted the voyage aesthetically.
- c. Cultural Context: The teacher placed the poem within the context of Nepali culture and Devkota's role in it. They emphasized how the poem reflected Nepali values, traditions, and the natural landscape familiar to Nepali readers. Meanwhile, some English teachers brought some references from Tennyson's poem. Eg.

I murmur, murmur, murmur on,
 Remembering my ocean;
 For life is flow, the reaching slow,
 But quick is quick emotion. (*The Brook* by Devkota)

I murmur under moon and stars
 In brambly wilderness
 I linger by my shingly bars;
 I loiter round my cresses; (*The Brook* by A.L. Tennyson)

The participant teachers and students agree that the poem celebrates nature. Devkota has painted the picture of the brook in this poem like a picture. However, some interpretational variations were created by culture, language, genre, and subjective perspective.

4.4.The Clock Tower (Ghantaghar)

The poem, *Ghantaghar (The Clock Tower)*, was composed by Bhupi Sherchan. The poet was born into a prosperous family in the Mustang District of Nepal. From a young age, he was renowned for his keen intellect and love of literature, so he traveled to the capital city, Kathmandu, and immersed himself in the city's thriving literary culture. His work is known for its poignant social commentary, depth of feeling, and masterful use of the Nepali language. Sherchan's poetry is marked by a blend of realism and romanticism, reflecting the socio-political landscape of Nepal during his time.

Ghantaghar was originally written in the Nepali language and was later translated into English as *The Clock Tower* by Padma Devkota. The poem reflects on the passage of time, societal change, and the personal emotions tied to these transformations. This poem uses the symbol of a clock tower to delve deeper into the themes of memory, impermanence, and the inevitability of change. The clock tower, a familiar and enduring feature in the poet's life, is vividly described in the poem's opening lines. The poet's life and society have changed over time, and this clock tower continues to observe these changes silently. Readers can visualize the clock tower's physical form as well as its metaphorical meaning because of the poet's meticulous imagery. The following interpretational variations in the original and the translated versions of the poem are drawn through analysis.

Similarities

- a. Themes and messages: The main ideas of time, history, change, and maybe the tenacity of tradition or the inevitable course of advancement are all conveyed in both renditions. *The Clock Tower* represents these ideas in the original and the translated versions. *The Clock Tower* image is a striking emblem to convey the old man's loneliness. The elderly guy suffers from the same fate as the clock tower—he is old, rejected, and waiting for his death. The harsh reality of old age is shown in poetry. In 1727 BS (1670 A. D.), King Pratap Malla erected Ranipokhari to memorialize his son. It was his wife's symbol of comfort. The old guy relieves his sorrow by remembering his past while gazing at the lake. The poet states:

Yeuta pensionwala budho lahure jhai

Ranipokharima balchi halera

Tatma uviyer ani rantar

Jhokkirahecha ghantaghar (original version)

(like an old Gurkha pensioner

Passing the dull, boring days of old age

the clock tower

as if

lowering a baited hook

into Ranipokhari). (1) (translated version)

- b. Imagery and symbols: Key images, such as the clock tower itself, its surroundings, and any notable events or historical references like “Lahure” and “army” associated with it, are interpreted in both versions, maintaining the poem's visual and symbolic impact.
- c. Tone: It is found that the original and the translated versions have the same emotional tone, regardless of whether it is nostalgic, introspective, critical, or a combination of feelings. In both versions of the poem, teachers and students are aroused by the same feelings.
- d. Form: The poem's original form is maintained, and readers are provided with a similar reading experience in both languages by generally maintaining the overall structure and style, including line breaks and stanza order.

Differences

- a. Cultural References: Certain cultural references and allusions in *Ghantaghar* are deeply rooted in Nepali traditions, history, or specific societal issues. The oldest clock tower in Nepal is the Ghantaghar, which is located in Kathmandu, the country's capital. It is

next to Trichandra College and opposite Rani Pokhari. Bir Shamsheer, the Prime Minister of Rana, constructed it. These ideas are not communicated in the English teachers' classroom.

- b. Meter and rhyme: Due to variations in phonetic and prosodic features, it was difficult to accurately convey the original poem's rhythm, meter, and rhyme schemes into English. The meaning may precede precise rhythmic reproduction in the translated version. The lines in the original poem:

Kunai fatera

Kunai musale katera (original version)

Some, by being torn off themselves

Others, by getting cut by rats (translated version)

In the original version, the last words “fatera” and “katera” rhyme, whereas the rhyme scheme is not maintained in the translated version. This also resulted in a variation in meaning while interpreting.

- c. Theme: Nostalgia is the main theme that the poem carries, which is minutely explained by the English teachers, whereas the teachers teaching in the original version did not focus on this.

The ideas, symbolism, and tonality of *Ghantaghar* and *The Clock Tower* are fundamentally similar, yet the translation process involves language, cultural quirks, and subjective judgments that all play important roles in leading to the variation in meaning in interpretation. While some subtleties may be lost or changed in the process, every effort has been made to preserve the core of the original meaning in the translation.

4.5.New Year (Naya Barsa)

Parijat composed the poem *Naya Barsa* was translated into the English version *The New Year* by Padma Devkota. The persona in the poem juxtaposes the familiarity of the same old living conditions with the anticipated freshness of a new year, which inspires the poet to rebel against the hard reality with at least a desire to change it and create something better. The poem's power comes from its unexpected turn of events that startles us with its effect. The poet feels compelled to paint it anew because the new year, which is supposed to usher in a spiritual rebirth, repeats the same old pattern.

The speaker recognizes the new year's arrival when she sees the light rising on the hill and the wind driving away the march. She can presume that New Year's Day has arrived because she can observe flower buds and nightingales flying around. "But" opens the third stanza, highlighting the poet's divergent points of view. I anticipated something new at the start of the year, yet the poet keeps describing the same old thing. She observes the mason wasps idly returning to their venerable nests in her home's filthy, black ceiling. Though the mind is preoccupied with the same old dreams, the entrance of the new year should have brought fresh things. She feels compelled to recreate nature by painting after realizing this.

The following interpretational variations of the poem were found in the original and translated versions.

Similarities

Interpretational Variations of Nepali Poems Translated to English

- a. Themes and message: The original and the translated versions conveyed the central themes of renewal, reflection, and hope associated with the new year. The essence of starting afresh and contemplating past experiences is preserved in both versions.
- b. Emotional tone: Whether nostalgic, upbeat, or reflective, the emotional tone is intended to remain constant between the source and translated texts. One of the Nepali teachers in FGD shared, “The translator aims to arouse the same emotions in the reader as in the source poem”. This statement reflected the delivery of both English and Nepali teachers in the classroom.
- c. Form and Style: While some adaptations may be necessary due to linguistic differences, the overall structure and style, such as stanza arrangement and line breaks, are generally preserved to maintain the poem's original form, which is commonly viewed by teachers and students.

Differences

- a. Word Choice: The specific words chosen by Parijat in Nepali might have rich, layered meanings that are difficult to capture precisely in English. The translator's translation would seek to find the closest equivalents, but some nuances are lost or altered. In the source language, the poet expresses:

Chaitra lai lakhetiraheko yo batas,
Ra ghasradai ukalo chadhiraheko gham dekda (original version)
seeing the wind that chases the March away
and the sun that clambers the hill (translated version)

Certain cultural references in *Naya Barsa* are deeply rooted in Nepali traditions and may not be fully translatable. “Chaitra” is the end of the year, whereas “March” is not. The interpretation varies because of this word choice. “thesedalin” is translated as “sooty ceiling,” and has captured the essence but possibly missing deeper cultural connotations.

- b. Interpretation: The Nepali teachers interpreted the poem as optimistic in tone as it celebrates the upcoming new year whereas the English teachers interpreted the poem as having a pessimistic tone. They explained that the persona has experienced the changes that are going to occur in the environment but returns with the old activities like ‘mason wasp’ returning lazily back to the nest. The last two lines of the poem:

“ani malai yi saraka sara prakirtilai
Yek palta rogan garidui jasto lagcha”
(‘Tis then I feel like painting
the entire nature afresh)

The teachers teaching in the source language interpret these two lines as the persona's revolutionary attitude to living in the new world because he/she is fed up with living with the old system.

4.6.Woman (Aaimai)

Woman (Aaimai) is a beautiful poem composed by Banira Giri. In honor of International Women's Day, the poem *Aaimai* was written, and it was translated into English by Michael James Hutt. She attempts to give a certain voice to Hindu culture through this poem. This poem was written to expose the treatment of women in Hindu society. Giri has given voice to the

voiceless women in her poem. She challenges the notion that women's existence is contingent upon men's existence. In the poem, women are viewed as the Lotus of Saraswati's hand in existence. They are mild, gentle, obedient, courteous, etc. The analysis of the poem's original and translated versions revealed the following similarities and differences.

Similarities

- a. Theme: The poem challenges men's stereotypical view of women based only on physical appearance. She parodies the male character as a blind man who is incapable of understanding women. The poem uses an analogy to tell the tale of the blind man and the elephant. The poet attempts to shed light on social reality through the moral story rather than other important aspects. By depicting the seven blind men and their presumptions, the poet expresses how society views women. She stands for women in their most basic forms.
- b. Analogy: In the fable of the Blind Men and the Elephant, a group of blind men who had never seen an elephant learn about it and develop an imaginary image through touch. However, each blind man feels only one portion of the animal's body, such as the side or tusk. After that, they each describe the elephant differently based on their little knowledge of the species. I found the teachers teaching both versions of the poem explained the story to justify the perception of males of women in the male chauvinistic society.
- c. Comparison: The poem of John Godfrey Saxe, *The Blind Men and the Elephant*, has been compared by Giri to explore the pathetic condition of women in a male-dominated society. The poem also makes a strong point on the concept of emancipation. It symbolizes the persistent fight of women to free themselves from the bonds of patriarchy as well as the innate longing for freedom and equality.

Differences

- a. Theme: When a blind man touches the hair, she defines a woman as Ganga, a religious figure. The teachers teaching the poem in the source language interpreted it from a religious point of view. They explained the relation between Shiva and Parvati and the holy Ganga, while those teaching in English mentioned that women were transmuted into things even in the age of the Gods. They had no separate identity from other Gods. It was similar to the notion of commodification. They explained it from the feminist point of view.
- b. Parody: The teachers teaching the poem in the source language had not explored much on the poem by John Godfrey Saxe, *The Blind Men and the Elephant*. They primarily focused on the content of the poem. They did not bring many references to the poem by Saxe to the classroom. So, this poem did not seem like a parody as such.

The poem *Women* illustrates the variety of positions and difficulties that women encounter. It considers what society expects of women and the frequently difficult circumstances they face. Giri emphasizes women's inner power and outward hardships with strong words and striking imagery. The poem pays homage to their fortitude, bravery, and unwavering pursuit of equality and recognition. Though many thematic aspects were interpreted similarly by the teachers teaching the source and target languages, I found interpretational variations in this poem.

5. DISCUSSION

This study sought to investigate the differences in interpretation that occur while teaching Nepali poems and their translated versions by comparing them in their original Nepali versions with their English translations in order to find variations in interpretations and meanings. The interpretation dug deeper into the challenges and opportunities presented by translating Nepali poetry into English, focusing on specific works such as *Parrot in the Cage* by Lekhanath Poudel, *Woman* by Banira Giri, *The Clock Tower* by Bhu Pi Serchan, *New Year* by Parijat, and *The Brook* by Laxmi Prasad Devkota. Each poem is deeply embedded in its unique historical, cultural, and linguistic context, adding to the layers of complexity of the translation process.

In *The Parrot in the Cage*, the parrot bemoans his life in the cage, which is a monologue. The parrot remembers his days of flying and foraging for wild foods in the forests, but now he finds himself trapped in a cage. Freshwater, shade, or mouthwatering fruits in the forest were all dreams of the parrot since he was unable to free himself from the cage. On the other hand, Banira Giri examines how society views and misunderstands women in her poem *Woman*. These opinions are frequently influenced by narrow, stereotyped perspectives. The poet criticizes the commodification and disintegration of women's identities in society by using this motif. By highlighting the depth and complexity of womanhood, the poet challenges society to view women as whole, multifaceted individuals rather than straightforward, predetermined roles.

In *The Clock Tower*, the elderly, retired veteran is compared to Ghantaghar's clock tower in the poem. He has lost all of his military gear, has given all of his belongings to his family members, and is elderly and despised. However, he has also retained two mementos, an old-fashioned cap, and a big, spherical pocket watch, of his time in the army, because he is jealous. The clock tower resembles an elderly veteran on pension who is reminiscing about the long and sandy days of old life. Similarly, in the poem *New Year*, the speaker recognizes the arrival of the new year when she sees the mind that drives March away, the sun that ascends the hill, and the nightingale that flutters around the flower buds. However, the poet also depicts the same old stuff when she observes the mason wasps idly making their way back to their familiar nests in her home's filthy, black ceiling. Though the mind is preoccupied with the same old things, the New Year should have delivered something new.

Laxmi Prasad Devkota uses the voyage of a running brook as a metaphor for life's passing in his poem *The Brook*. The stream traverses a variety of terrains, encountering challenges, forging its own route, and never stopping. Through the brook's voyage, Devkota illustrates tenacity, perseverance, and the inherent beauty of life's ups and downs. With its constant motion, the stream represents the spirit of development and advancement, welcoming every experience and obstacle. By highlighting themes of tenacity, energy, and the delight found in nature's progression, Devkota's imagery honors the beauty of life's journey.

The study uncovered multiple instances in which the cultural background, colloquial idioms, and emotional tone of the English translations deviated from those of the original Nepali writings. According to Gutt (2014), the translation fails to match the pseudo-poetry of the original. The author states that the target language may not accept affectation and exaggeration in a text of this type and that the translation should not attempt a match on this dimension. The findings corroborate the issues in the translated version of the poem *Parrot in the Cage*. It lost

emotional depth since it was unable to capture the rich cultural meaning of Nepali cultural history. Teachers teaching in the Nepali version explained the word “baburo” as “miserable” who is in a painful situation, whereas the teachers teaching the English version mentioned the meaning of “child” superficially, which cannot carry the real meaning of the poem. The poet intended to reflect on the terrible state in which common people were treated like second-class citizens. The poet tries to expose the unfairness of the Rana emperors. He has depicted a parrot as a figure imprisoned in a cage and a cage as an emblem or icon of trap, a ‘baburo’. The poet wanted to refer to the pathetic condition of Nepali people living in terrible conditions under Rana's rule. In a similar line to Dingwaney (1995), translation is a vehicle through which ‘third world cultures’ (are made to) travel. However, certain cultural references in *Naya Barsa* are deeply rooted in Nepali traditions and may not be fully translatable. “Chaitra” is the end of the year, whereas “March” is not. The interpretation varies because of this word choice. “thisdalin” is translated as “sooty ceiling” and has captured the essence, but possibly misses deeper cultural connotations. The translated versions are missing their poetic structure and harmony of rhythm, losing poetic beauty.

Similarly, Banira Giri's *Woman* highlights the challenges of preserving gender and societal themes across languages, where the interpretational variations are caused by cultural differences. While Nepali instructors taught the poem, they interpreted the poem as associated with the myth and culture of Hinduism, whereas the English instructors interpreted the poem from a Feminist perspective. These results underscore the significance of cultural competency and sensitivity in literary translations and have important implications for the area of translation studies. In terms of literary criticism, it draws attention to the constraints and possible prejudices that translations may impose, which could have an impact on how well the original work is appreciated and understood. Furthermore, this study acknowledges that interpretational differences arise naturally when translating literature between different languages and cultural contexts.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The comparative study of these versions emphasizes that preserving the source texts' spirit, sensibility, and cultural background is just as vital as language accuracy. The translator's decisions, which are impacted by their comprehension of the source text and the limitations of the target language, frequently cause interpretational variances. In the end, translating Nepali poetry into English requires a careful balancing act between accuracy, inventiveness, and cultural sensitivity to ensure that the translated works honor the voices and intents of the original poets while also striking a chord with new audiences. Teaching outcomes are significantly influenced by interpretational variations, particularly regarding how students understand, evaluate, and emotionally respond to poetry. These variations affect not only literal comprehension but also the cultural, artistic, and emotional elements that are vital to teaching poetry.

Teachers and students observed that when poetry like Pinjadako Suga and Naya Barsa was translated into English, their metaphorical depth was lost. For instance, the word "baburo," which is simply translated as "child," was intended to convey the meaning of "miserable" or "pitiful," a metaphor for the downtrodden Nepali people under the Rana administration. It largely affected the teaching outcomes, like Students reading only the English version struggled to grasp the depth of the metaphor. This leads to further superficial analysis in assignments and

misinterpretation of the poet's tone or message. The students will also not have an emotional attachment. Similarly, in *Naya Barsa*, the word "Chaitra" marks the last month of the Nepali calendar, emotionally loaded with transition and reflection. Translated as "March," the reference loses cultural and poetic weight. The teaching outcome is affected because the teachers must spend extra time providing cultural context. Similarly, the students may not connect emotionally or symbolically with the poem's seasonal themes. It results in a skewed or culturally detached discussion, which weakens cross-cultural literary understanding. In the same way, the translated stanzas of *The Clock Tower* and *The Brook* demonstrate how translations can break rhyme systems and rhythm. For mood and tone, poetic elements like alliteration, meter, and rhyme are crucial. It also affects teaching outcomes as students miss the lyrical qualities that reinforce meaning. The teachers also find it difficult to teach sound imagery, as a result, the students may perceive the poem as dry or prosaic, limiting aesthetic appreciation.

All translations are acts of interpretation in which the meaning is changed rather than just communicated. Acknowledging and valuing these divergent interpretations can enhance our comprehension of literature and the cultural subtleties it represents, cultivating a more welcoming and compassionate worldwide literary community.

Future prospects

This study opens up several prospects for research, academic discourse, and practical application. It can be used to explore translation theories and their application in preserving the essence of Nepali poetry. It also makes an effort to bring Nepali literature to a global audience by improving translation techniques by examining how metaphors, idioms, and cultural expressions evolve in translation. It can incorporate translated works into curricula to enhance cross-cultural understanding.

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